

DARK ELF ARMY

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The Dark Host

Over five thousand years ago, a great civil war erupted in the Elven realm of Ulthuan and after centuries of slaughter eventually the Druchii, or Dark Elves as they became known, were driven north to the cold, harsh land of Naggaroth. Over millennia the Dark Elves have been twisted and corrupted until they have become complete opposites of the noble and altruistic High Elves. They are a

cruel and wicked
race, revelling
in the pain
and



despair of others, completely untrustworthy and capable of carrying out the most wanton acts of depravity and murder. Dark Elves retain the most part of their hatred and anger towards their kin the High Elves, whom they see as traitors to their leader, the Witch King, and blasphemers to their god Khaine, God of Murder.

Like all Elves, Dark Elves are lithe and sinuous, their muscles are strong and their reactions every bit as quick as their agile minds. Despite their deathly pallor and cruel faces they are savagely beautiful and highly intelligent. In spite of this intelligence, Dark Elves are given to all sorts of self-destructive, impetuous impulses such as blood lust and vengeance. Whereas a High Elf General is cool, noble and analytical in his approach to war Dark Elf Generals are blood-crazed, sadistic fiends who care very little about senselessly throwing away the lives of their troops. As suits their nature, the Dark Elves almost invariably wear dark and sinister attire. Their helmets and other wargear are exquisitely well made and highly decorated with patterns of black, gold and silver.

In battle Dark Elves prefer to use guile and cunning over brute force, for they are piratical raiders and slavers who are greatly feared by other races. Dark Elves specialise in lightning raids on mainly coastal regions overwhelming the local forces before a proper defence can be mustered. They drag entire tribes back to their dark homeland in chains either to be worked to death in the mines or slaughtered on the altars to Khaine, their dark god. Where their hated foes, the High Elves, use the bow, the Dark Elves prefer the repeater crossbow – a fiendish, quick-firing weapon. Where the High Elves ride to war upon beautiful white and grey stallions the Dark Elves choose vicious, lumbering reptiles called Cold Ones. Where the revered

NAGGAROTH – REALM OF THE DARK ELVES

Far across the Great Ocean to the west of the Old World lies the vast continent of Naggaroth. It is a harsh and rugged wilderness above which dark clouds gather to unleash terrible storms upon the land. Beneath the massive mountains ranges lie a huge network of underground caverns through which the Dark Elves sail their dread Black Arks to launch surprise raids on the distant kingdoms of the Old World, and further afield to Nippon and Cathay. But the principle target for Dark Elf invasion is the magical isle of Ulthuan, the majestic homeland of all Elvenkind, from which this Dark Kindred were exiled many millennia ago.



lords and princes of the High Elves choose Dragons as mighty beasts of war, malicious beastmasters drive monstrous, ferocious War Hydra into battle with their cruel whips and goads. And where the great mages of Ulthuan are the masters of High Magic, pure and free of the taint of Chaos, the fell but beautiful Sorceresses of the Dark Elves practice Dark Magic – the very stuff of Chaos itself.

In every way the Dark
Elves are the antithesis of
the noble Elves and the
doom of both these
kindreds is
inexplicably
intertwined.





DARK ELF ARMY SELECTOR

Troops	Type	Attack	Hits	Armour	Command	Unit Size	Points per Unit	Min/Max	Special
Spearmen	Infantry	3	3	5+	–	3	60	2/–	–
Crossbowmen	Infantry	3/1	3	6+	–	3	75	1/–	*1
Witch Elves	Infantry	5	3	0	–	3	70	–/2	*2
Dark Riders	Cavalry	3/1	3	6+	–	3	100	–/4	*1
Cold One Knights	Cavalry	3	3	4+	–	3	110	–/–	–
Harpies	Monster	2	3	6+	–	3	65	–/1	*3
War Hydra	Monster	6/2	4	4+	–	1	135	–/1	*4
Bolt Thrower	Artillery	1/3	2	0	–	2	65	–/1	*5
General	General	+2	–	–	9	1	125	1	–
Hero	Hero	+1	–	–	8	1	80	–/2	–
Sorceress	Wizard	+0	–	–	8	1	80	–/1	–
Manticore	Monstrous Mount	+2	–	–	–	–	+80	–/1	*6
Chariot	Chariot Mount	+1	–	–	–	–	+10	–/1	–

Special Rules

1. Crossbowmen & Dark Riders. Dark Elves exclusively use the ingenious repeater crossbow, known as *Uraithen* or Deathrain, a weapon that is far more technically advanced than other race can hope to achieve. This weapon reloads itself from a box-shaped magazine fixed to the top, above the string, using a sophisticated spring mechanism and so can lay down quite a withering rain of fire. Although the Dark Elves are as renowned as their High Elf kindred for their martial prowess, the repeater crossbow is less accurate than a bow and is generally fired from the hip.

Dark Elf units armed with this weapon may fire once at a range of 30cm or twice at a range of 15cm. As it is a complicated weapon and takes a while to reload, units armed with it may only fire once when they stand and shoot.

2. Witch Elves. These are the cruellest most bloodthirsty of all Dark Elves. These she-elves are known as the Brides of Khaine, the Elven God of Murder, and their ferocity in combat is second to none. A unit of Witch Elves always uses its Initiative to charge an enemy if possible and can't be given orders instead. They'll never use their Initiative to evade. They can't be driven back by shooting and do not roll for drive backs. If victorious in combat, they must pursue or advance where possible. Witch Elves are

unaffected by enemies that cause *Terror* in combat, so they do not suffer the usual -1 Attack modifier.

3. Harpies. These are identical to Chaos Harpies (page 134 of the Warmaster rulebook).

4. War Hydra. This is a titanic, multi-headed monster, a creature from the dark caverns beneath the Blackspine Mountains of Naggaroth. These beasts are so ferocious that they cannot be brigaded with any other units other than War Hydras. They are so huge that they cause *Terror*. The War Hydra may breathe fire with a range of 20cm and two attacks that are worked out in the normal way.

5. Elven Bolt Thrower. The Dark Elves share the same advanced technology as their High Elf cousins. This follows the same rules as for the High Elf Reaper on page 69 of the Warmaster rulebook. Because of their incredible martial prowess Elven bolt throwers receive a +1 to hit (therefore hitting on a 3+ in the open).

6. Manticore. Generals, Heroes and Wizards may ride a Manticore. With the body of a lion, wings of a monstrous bat and a whip-like tail this creature is horror itself. The Manticore can fly, increasing the rider's movement to 100cm. An extra +2 Attacks are added to those of the rider. A Manticore causes *Terror*.

MAGIC

DOOM BOLT

5+Range: 30cm

A bolt of pure darkness is unleashed upon the foes of the Dark Elves.

Draw an imaginary line 30cm long, extending from the Wizard's stand in any direction you like. Each unit under the line takes three shooting attacks worked out in the normal way. Note that this spell can affect several units and will affect all units in its path, even your own! Unengaged units can be driven back. Engaged units are not driven back but carry over hits that are scored into combat.

BEAST MASTER

6+Range: 30cm

A dark wind falls upon the enemy and all beasts quiver under its foulness.

Each enemy cavalry/chariot/monster unit within 30cm of the Wizard is immediately *confused* (while they struggle to control their beasts).

Confusion ends normally at the end of target's next Command phase (don't forget the -1 Combat modifier for *confusion*).

DOMINION

4+Range: 30cm

Upon uttering the name of Khaine, an unnatural and unbearable agony suffuses the bodies of the Dark Elves' foes.

This spell can be cast on any unit within range regardless of whether the Wizard can see them or not. The enemy cannot charge or move whilst the *Dominion* persists and, if engaged in combat, cannot pursue or advance. This spell lasts until the end of the opposing player's turn. Only one *Dominion* can be successfully cast on a unit at a time.

SOUL STEALER

5+Range: Touching

Invoking the fell daemons of the abyss, the Wizard tears the very souls from his opponents.

This can only be cast if the Wizard has joined a unit in combat.

The spell automatically makes three attacks on one enemy unit which is touching the unit the Wizard has joined. These are worked out in the usual way, except that armour has no effect. Any hits scored are carried over into the first round of combat and count as having been struck in combat.



NEW RULES





NEW RULES

The great jaw snapped shut, ripping the High Elf in two. The dismembered torso fell to the ground as the Dragon arched its neck and searched for a new victim. The row of sharp spears thrust in vain at the hard scales that protected the tough dragon hide. With one mighty swing of his blade the Witch King beheaded three of his assailants. As their limp, lifeless bodies hit the floor the attack wavered. Even the brave High Elves knew that to fight such a powerful opponent was sheer folly. The Dragon let out a deafening roar and with that the spearmen broke. As they turned to escape, the great beast took in a deep breath, filling its massive lungs. With another loud bellow it released a cloud of thick noxious gas that enveloped the fleeing troops. In a matter of seconds each soldier was brought to his knees, gasping in vain for breath. Their lungs had been burnt by the corrosive acids in the Dragon's breath, each of them would suffocate to death in excruciating pain.

Malekith dug his heels into his stirrups. It was the signal that his mount was to take to the air. The beast stretched out its wings to their full span, casting a dark shadow over the bloodstained earth below. With just a couple of beats it had risen from the ground and, with an agility that was belied by the monster's size, it hovered over the carnage below. From his high vantage point the Dark Elf king could see that the battle was faring well. The charge of the Cold One Knights had broken the left flank of the High Elf line. Once through the solid formation, of spearmen the savage beasts had borne down upon the lines of archers with remarkable speed. His warriors had been victorious and, even as he looked around, were now gathering the captured High Elves into lines.

The ancient ruined palace of Anlec was now his again to rebuild and fortify. From here his forces could once more strike at the heart of Ulthuan.

He issued a command to the Dragon and it covered the distance between him and the ancient castle with remarkable speed. The creature landed upon the cracked marble stairs that had once led up to the throne room. From this palace Malekith and his mother Morathi had held court. He and his father alone understood the need for war. From this very land had his father not saved the fate of those Elves who now spat insults at his son? Malekith leapt down from his saddle and strode up the stairs towards the ruined entrance of the throne room. Though the roof had long since collapsed, the doors to the room were barred before him. Did the fools really believe that they could deny the rightful heir entry to his own throne room? With a single whispered word uttered from the mouth of Malekith, the ancient doors cracked before bursting open. A sorcerous wind tore through the small chamber creating whirlwinds of dust and debris.

Malekith found it strange that there had been no guard posted at the doors. Were the High Elves so vain in their own pride that they thought their army undefeatable?

"Come no further vile Druchii, this is not your realm to rule." The bidden challenger who spoke was calm and showed no sign of fear of the king of the Dark Elves.

"And who is this that dares tell me I may not rule over what is mine." The Witch King hissed out his reply, hatred boiling through his words. From behind the broken stone dais where the throne once sat, a single warrior stepped out. On his head he wore the ornate feathered helm of Yvresse, and the Witch King could sense a powerful magical field emanating from the sword the warrior held in his hand. In an instant

Malekith knew who stood before him.

"Ab, the impetuous Eltharion. Has your vanity grown so great that you believe you can challenge me? Come fool meet your doom." As Malekith spoke his challenge Eltharion raised his sword in preparation for the combat. Malekith had little doubt he could slay the young warrior but he would not give Eltharion the satisfaction of honourable combat. Pointing his armoured gauntlet at the High Elf hero he uttered a single word. In an instant, Eltharion felt a darkness surround him, he clutched at his throat unable to breathe. His entire body coursed with pain, as though his blood had been turned to molten lead, tears of blood poured from his eyes and he fell to his knees in agony, his Fangsword slipping from his grasp.

The Witch King let out a malicious laugh. "You pitiful wretch, had you led your valiant men on the battlefield instead of cowering inside this palace then you may have stood a chance of defeating me. Know this before you die, none tread on my land without my word. Those who dare defy me suffer death." The Witch King stepped over to where Eltharion lay and, with a strength disguised by his thin, armour bound body, he picked up the High Elf by his neck and dragged him to the open doors. Over a hundred High Elves knelt in a long line, their hands tied behind their backs and their necks exposed. Over each of them stood one of Malekith's elite Executioners holding their terrible blades high in readiness.

"How fitting that the warden of Yvresse will be the first to acknowledge my succession to the throne of Ulthuan. For your loyalty I will spare the lives of your men; they are but misguided fools and under my rule they will learn the error of their ways."

Eltharion's pain multiplied tenfold with the knowledge that he had the lives of his men in his hands. But for his pride he could perhaps save those soldiers who had fought with him so valiantly on the shores of Naggaroth. He knew though that he could never bow to Malekith, his men would not wish it so either. With his last strength he raised his head in defiance.

"You are but a Prince of Darkness." As the words passed his lips his body sagged and fell into unconsciousness in the grasp of Malekith. In a dark rage the Dark Elf lord picked up the body of the noble hero, holding it over his head before casting him down the stairs.

"Have my most skilled torturers see that his spirit is broken and his body becomes little more than an empty husk," he ordered one of his commanders.

"What information would you have us extract from this sorrowful excuse for an Elf my Lord?" The commander bowed.

"There is nothing that this one can tell me. Once they have had their pleasure, have what is left of the noble Elf sent back to Lotbern. It will be a warning of the fate of any who dare stand between me and what is rightfully mine." Malekith's eyes betrayed no sign of emotion, frozen in a deadly stare of contempt at the wounded Eltharion.

"And what of the prisoners?" the commander enquired.

"Kill them. Kill them all." His order was met by the dull thud of Elven heads as they were brutally separated from their torsos. As he walked back into the throne room and sat on the cold stone dais a smile passed his lips. Such slaughter would be the fate of any who defied him. The weak would die in order that the strong prevail.

DESIGNER'S NOTES

At first glance working up an army list for the Dark Elves seemed an easy undertaking, after all aren't they just High Elves dressed in black? Mmm... therein lay the biggest problem. In Warhammer the two races are distinguished by slight differences, not fundamental ones. Most of the troop selection is very similar and only really in peripheral aspects does the true identity for each kindred arise – such as magic, magic items and special rules like *Hatred*. Of course, this is difficult to convey in the tight game mechanics of Warmaster.

First, we had to decide on the units that were required for the army. Obviously spearmen, crossbowmen, Cold One Knights and Dark Riders immediately sprang to mind as the solid basis for the army. These troops would correspond with their High Elven counterparts. Then the more exotic units like Witch Elves, Harpies and War Hydras were added to include a bit of spice and help differentiate the army from their High Elven cousins. Originally, we included chariots but the decision was made to remove them, not because they don't fit with the background, but more so because we didn't want to unbalance the army. We had to be very careful not to create a better version of the High Elf army with similar units but more choice. We've had several suggestions for additional units – Corsairs, Slave units, Black Guard of Naggaroth, etc. These will hopefully be included later as alternative miniatures for spearmen.

Choosing the units was relatively easy. With the exception of the Witch Elves and the War Hydras, this was essentially a High Elf army – same stat lines, same characters. We toyed for a while with rules for repeating crossbows – 15cm range, two shots per stand. This just didn't seem to work and made the army far too defensive,

which doesn't befit an army of raiders. Finally, we settled on firing twice at a range of 15cm, once at 30cm but no +1 to hit and only one shot for stand & shoot. We also playtested Cold One Knights with 4 Attacks, like the Cold One Riders from the Lizardman army but again this didn't quite work. Cold One Knights aren't renowned for being that much more powerful than the knights of other races and when compared to Lizardmen Cold One Riders it is accepted that it is the Saurus on the Cold One that confers the 4th Attack. The hardest decision was the General's Leadership. For a long time we agreed that it should, without a shadow of a doubt, be the same as High Elves – but what works in Warhammer isn't always the case in Warmaster. Dark Elves are as smart as High Elves, yes, but are they as cool and logical in battle? No, we didn't think so – just read the Warhammer background.

So, we decided to keep things simple, always the best way, give the General Leadership of 9, rely on a different spell list (thanks there to Stephan Hess!) and the new unit types to give this new army a very different flavour to the existing High Elf army. Finally, a monstrous mount for the characters was included and again we wanted to steer well clear of Dragons. So we chose a Manticore, very Dark Elven indeed!

